

Application no. 09/879,734

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and continued examination of the above-identified application are respectfully requested.

The amendments to the claims further define what the applicants regard as their invention and/or are editorial in nature. Full support for the amendments can be found throughout the present application, including the claims as originally filed. Accordingly, no questions of new matter should arise, and entry of the amendments is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7-19 remain in this application. Claim 6 has been canceled. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to incorporate selected languages from original claims 6 and 8.

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-7, 9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by WO 99/37054 (the '054 publication). For the following reasons, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claims 1 and 9 now include the limitation originally recited in claim 8. The '054 publication does not teach or suggest that access to the data storage space can be managed by at least one user with regard to times and dates when at least one further user can write to and/or read from the data storage space, as recited in claims 1 and 9.

Claim 6 has been canceled, and claims 2-5, 7 and 12 are dependent directly or indirectly on claims 1 or 9 and recite further limitations therefrom. Accordingly, these claims are also patentable over the '054 publication.

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by An *et al.* (U.S. patent no. 6,715,073). For the following reasons, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of the present application relates, in part, to a method which provides an on-line tendering environment where at least one user (*e.g.*, a buyer) can control the times

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and dates in which at least one further user (*e.g.*, suppliers) can submit tenders to the buyer, in response to a given invitation to tender from the buyer.

An *et al.* describes a system for allowing a user to store data and run programs in a secure memory area or vault on a server. The access to the users' vault is limited only to the user by means of digital certificates and data transfer protected by public/private key encryption.

An *et al.* does not teach or suggest allowing at least one user (*e.g.*, buyer) access to the storage space and allowing at least one further user (*e.g.*, vendors) access to the same data storage space as recited in claims 1 and 9. In fact, one skilled in the art, by reading An *et al.*, at col. 2, lines 59-65 and col. 6, lines 1-3, would conclude that An *et al.* teaches away by limiting access only to one user. Furthermore, An *et al.* does not teach or suggest that further users' access to the data storage space can be managed by at least one user with regard to times and dates, when at least one further user can write to and/or read from the data storage space, as recited in claims 1 and 9. Dependent claim 6 has been canceled and claims 2-5 and 7-11 are dependent directly or indirectly on claims 1 and 9 and recite further limitations therefrom. Accordingly, these claims are also patentable over An *et al.*

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over An *et al.* Furthermore, the Examiner states that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to place the invention of An *et al.* on a computer-readable medium. Claims 13-16 are directly or indirectly dependent on claim 1 and recite further limitations therefrom. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

At page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over the '054 publication. Furthermore, the Examiner states that it

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would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to place the invention of the '054 publication on a computer-readable medium. Claims 13-16 are directly or indirectly dependent on claim 1 and recite further limitations therefrom. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1980. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and should also be charged to said Deposit Account.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone should there be any remaining questions as to the patentability of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

4/1/2005

  
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